SENATE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

LANSING, MICHIGAN

For Immediate Release March 17, 2004 Sen. Ray Basham: 517/373-7800 Sen. Michael Prusi: 517/373-7840

SENATE DEMS INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE

LANSING- Michigan Senate Democrats took an important first step in defense of Michigan's working families today by introducing legislation to raise the state minimum wage. The Democratic sponsored legislation would raise the minimum wage to \$7.15/hour and tie future wage increases to the rate of inflation.

"Raising the minimum wage by two dollars per hour would directly benefit at least 464,000 Michigan workers, or nearly 1 in 6 hourly workers statewide," said State Sen. Ray Basham (D-Taylor). "Michigan's working families need our support as the rising cost of living continues to erode the value of their wages and further diminishes the quality of their lives."

Sen. Ray Basham is the sponsor of Senate Bill 318 that would raise the minimum wage in three stages. The bill would raise the minimum wage to \$5.90/hour by July 1, 2005 and to \$6.65/hour by January 1, 2006. The final increase would raise the wage to \$7.15/hour on January 1, 2007.

"Forty percent of minimum wage workers are the sole breadwinners for their families," said Sen. Mike Prusi (D-Ishpeming). "Every Michigan worker should be able to live the American Dream in which hard work is rewarded with economic advancement."

Sen. Mike Prusi is sponsor of Senate Bill 320 that would tie the state minimum wage permanently to the rate of inflation. If the minimum wage was worth today what it was in 1968, for example, it would be set at about \$8.50 per hour, yet it remains stuck at \$5.15.

The Democratic legislative package also includes bills that would raise the minimum wage for wait-staff to \$4.60/hour by January 1, 2007 and tie future wait staff wage increases to the rate of inflation. Senate Democrats are also launching a website to promote the minimum wage legislation called Higherminimumwage.com.

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Please Note: An audio file of Senators Basham and Prusi commenting on the minimum wage package can be downloaded at the following web address:

Sen. Basham: http://www.senate.mi.gov/Audio%20Clips/08-031705.wav
Sen. Prusi: http://www.senate.mi.gov/Audio%20Clips/38-031705.wav